Blueprint

Assessing Entry-Level Competency for Four Nursing Professions

BC CN&M
British Columbia College of Nurses & Midwives

ncas
nursing community assessment service

Table of Contents

Summary

The Nursing Community Assessment Service (NCAS) assesses the competencies required for safe, entry-level practice as defined by the nursing regulatory bodies and the BC Care Aide and Community Health Worker Registry (Registry).

NCAS assesses candidates for the following four nursing professions: registered nurses (RN), registered psychiatric nurses (RPN), licensed practical nurses (LPN), health care assistants (HCA). All candidates must complete a computer-based assessment and a simulation lab assessment. RPN candidates must also complete a clinical decision-making oral assessment.

The blueprint has two major components: the competencies to be measured, and the guidelines on how these competencies will be measured. The blueprint was developed by representatives from the nursing regulators, the Registry, academic institutions and practice environments.

Entry-level competencies to be measured

NCAS assess a selection of entry-level competencies for each nursing profession according to the competency profiles developed by each profession's regulatory body.

- Health care assistants: BC Ministry of Health's B.C. Health Care Assistants Core Competency Profile (2014)
- Licensed practical nurses: Canadian Council for Practical Nurse Regulators' Entry-Level Competencies for LPNs (2019)
- Registered nurses: Canadian Council of Registered Nurse Regulators' Entry-Level Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses (2018)
- Registered psychiatric nurses: Registered Psychiatric Nurse Regulators of Canada's Registered Psychiatric Nurse Entry-Level Competencies (2014)

Measuring the competencies

Structural variables

Computer-based assessment

This assessment uses authentic, contextualized scenarios that entry-to practice nurses typically face. Each scenario mimics an interaction with a patient that a candidate might encounter in real life and unfolds over the course of 4 to 7 multiple-choice questions. Candidates engage their clinical thinking to assess a situation and make decisions about a complex problem involving multiple variables. The number of case simulations in the assessment depends on the number of professions being assessed. The assessment typically takes between 2 and 5 hours to complete. Longer assessments include a 15-minute break.

Profession	Length of assessment
HCA	3 hours
LPN	3 hours
RN	3 hours
RPN	3 hours
Dual-track (LPN and RN)	3 hours
Triple-track (HCA, LPN and RN)	5 hours

Simulation lab assessment

The simulation lab component of the assessment includes simulations using interactive and standardized patients. Additional equipment such as IV pumps, EKG monitors, medication carts, crash carts, and isolation carts will be available to create a realistic simulated hospital environment. The simulation lab for RPNs will also include a clinical decision-making oral assessment.

- **Simulations using interactive mannequins:** These simulations will include the use of high and medium-fidelity interactive mannequins. These mannequins present different medical conditions with corresponding vital sign changes. They can respond to simulated medications and present varying heart and lung sounds, as well as pulses. Mannequin simulations are used to determine a candidate's capacity to conduct patient assessments, perform nursing interventions, communicate effectively with patients, families and other healthcare team members, and make clinical decisions while in an environment where a mistake will not harm a patient.

- **Simulation using standardized patients:** Standardized patients are actors who are trained to portray patients consistently and are used often used in an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) setting.

Oral assessment (RPN only)

A debriefing component will take place at the end of each station of the RPN online simulation. The debrief will use a structured format that is designed to measure critical thinking and clinical judgment

competencies, the candidate's capacity for self-reflection, and the candidate's thought processes that influenced their actions.

Stations and assessment length (simulation lab assessment)

Profession	Stations	Assessment length
HCA	2 scenarios with standardized patients 3 scenarios using a medium-fidelity mannequin	10 minutes to complete each simulation (x5)
LPN	2 scenarios with standardized patients 1 scenario using a high-fidelity mannequin	20 minutes to complete each simulation (x3)
RN	2 scenarios with standardized patients 3 scenarios using a high-fidelity mannequin	20 minutes to complete each simulation (x5)
RPN	3 scenarios with standardized patients	45 minutes to complete each online simulation (x3) 10 minutes for clinical decision-making oral assessment (x3)
Dual-track (LPN and RN)	2 scenarios with standardized patients 3 scenarios using a high-fidelity mannequin	20 minutes to complete each simulation (x5)
Triple-track (HCA, LPN and RN)	4 scenarios with standardized patients 3 scenarios using a medium-fidelity mannequin 3 scenarios using a high-fidelity mannequin	HCA component: 10 minutes to complete each simulation (x5) LPN/RN component: 20 minutes to complete each simulation (x5)

Contextual variables

NCAS uses the following elements to design the assessment scenarios.

Worplace setting	1. Inpatient care: Individuals requiring in hospital care, including forensics treatment centres. 2. Community care: Includes all community health services, including mental health, public health, home care, group homes, detox centres, clinics, assisted living, etc. 3. Complex care: for individuals who require 24-hour support, personal nursing care and/or treatment by skilled nursing staff. Includes long-term care or residential care.

Life span categories	Children: 0-14	Youth: 15-24	Adults: 25-64	Seniors: 65-84	Older seniors: 85+

Client health status	The assessment may address any health status, body system, disease, disorder or condition that is within the scope of practice of the entry-level nurse as defined by the regulator. Not all body systems, diseases, disorders or conditions will be covered in every assessment. Some complex scenarios may cover more than one area. The following are some areas that may be covered in the assessment:				
HCA	Arthritis Cancer Cerebrovascular accident	Cerebral palsy Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)	Congestive heart failure Depression Diabetes	Down's syndrome Fetal alcohol syndrome	Multiple sclerosis Osteoporosis
LPN	*Medical care:* Anxiety Arthritis Benign prostatic hyperplasia Cardiovascular disease Cancer Cerebral palsy *Post-op care:* Angiogram Appendicitis Bowel obstruction Cataract	Cerebrovascular accident Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) Chronic renal failure Cystic fibrosis Fractures Gallstones Hernia repairs Hip replacement	Diabetes Delirium Dementia Depression Gastrointestinal bleed Hypothyroidism Liver ascites Hip replacement Hysterectomy Kidney stones	Neurological disorders Osteoporosis Palliative care Parkinson' disease Pediatrics Post-partum care Knee replacement Scopes (bronchial, colon, endoscopy)	Rehabilitation Respiratory disease Schizophrenia Sensory diseases Sepsis Substance abuse Transurethral resection of the prostate

RN	*Medical care:* Arthritis Cancer Cardiovascular diseases Cerebrovascular accident Dementia Endocrine, metabolic, nutritional diseases (diabetes)	Gastrointestinal disease (bleeding, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis) Maternal health Mental health disorders (anxiety and mood disorders)	Obstetrics (premature birth, ante and post-partum bleed) Osteoporosis Pain management	Palliative Pediatrics Peripheral vascular disease	Respiratory diseases (COPD, emphysema) Stroke Trauma
	Public health: Health promotion	Health prevention	Immunization	Safety	
	Surgical care: Bowel Resection Cataract	Coronary angioplasty Gynecological	Orthopedic Removal of appendix	Removal of gallbladder	Urology
RPN	Anxiety disorders Bipolar and related disorders Depressive disorders	Eating disorders Mood disorders Neurocognitive disorders	Neurodevelopmental disorders Obsessive compulsive and related disorders	Personality disorders Schizophrenia Spectrum and other psychotic disorders	Substance-related and addictive disorders Trauma and stress-related disorders
Competencies for assessment	The competencies measured in the assessment focus on the applicant's ability to integrate knowledge, skills and behavior.				